

COMPENSATION, TRAVEL AND LOGISTICS INFORMATION

Compensation

National Assessment Governing Board members serve as Special Government Employees (SGE), a special class of employees within the government. As an SGE, the U.S. Department of Education anticipates that you will serve for 130 days or less during any period of 365 consecutive days. SGEs are compensated for work as a Governing Board member. This includes work preparing for and attending the Board meetings (approximately 4 days for each meeting), committee meetings, ad hoc meetings, teleconferences, press conferences, and other work as needed.

Under federal government regulations, a Board member's time is computed as follows:

- (1) One full day—8 hours of work on a given date, and
- (2) A partial day—less than 8 hours of work on a given date.

Compensation for a full day's work is \$100.00. Compensation for a partial day's work is pro-rated at a rate of \$12.50 per hour.

As an SGE, you do not have access to the federal payroll system and since members work on an intermittent basis, payroll is submitted on a quarterly basis based on the number of hours that you have worked on behalf of the Board. Hours worked are recorded by Governing Board staff and submitted to the Department's Payroll Office. Payments are transmitted electronically to the bank account you provided to us when you submitted the personnel forms, which included a Direct Deposit Form. The Department of Education's payroll office can provide you with a copy of your earnings statement at your request.

Compensation questions may be submitted to Donnetta Kennedy via email at Donnetta.Kennedy@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 357-0394.

Federal Travel Regulations

While conducting official Board business, Governing Board members are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses, in accordance with U.S. Department of Education rules and regulations and in compliance with the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) that can be found at

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources>. A summary of the most relevant provisions of the travel regulations, frequently asked questions, and selected pages from the General Services Administration (GSA) web site are provided below. This information is relevant for in-person meetings.

Travel expenses for lodging and meals are reimbursed on a per diem basis. The per diem allowance is a daily rate established by the Federal Government for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. This rate is revised every fiscal year to reflect changes in the cost of living and time of year. Per diem allowances and calculations can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/mie-breakdown>.

As noted on the GSA web page, there are six Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE) tiers in the lower 48 continental United States (ranging from \$55 to \$76). The M&IE amount for Washington, DC is typically \$76; it ranges by time of year. When lodging and/or meals are provided by the government, corresponding deductions are made from the per diem reimbursement. On travel days (arrival and departure dates), per diem is payable at three fourths of the daily limit, e.g., \$57.00 for Washington, DC. Receipts for meals are not required, but receipts for lodging and ground transportation costs are required and must accompany the reimbursement claims.

If you need to deduct a meal amount, for instance, first determine the location of the meeting. The M&IE rate for the meeting will be one of the six tiers listed on the table below. Find the corresponding amount on the first line of the table (M&IE Total) and then look below for each specific meal deduction amount. The table also lists the portion of the M&IE rate that is provided for incidental expenses (currently \$5 for all tiers), as well as the amount for the first and last calendar day or travel at 75 percent.

M&IE Total (based on city)	\$55	\$56	\$61	\$66	\$71	\$76
Breakfast	\$13	\$13		\$16	\$17	\$18
Lunch	\$14	\$15	\$16	\$17	\$18	\$19
Dinner	\$23	\$23	\$26	\$28	\$31	\$34
Incidentals*	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5
First & Last Day of Travel	\$41.25	\$42.00	\$45.75	\$49.50	\$53.25	\$57.00

* Incidental expenses include items such as porter, maid, and baggage tips.

Costs incurred by members that exceed the per diem rate cannot be reimbursed. Actual expenses are reimbursed only when the rate is lower than the per diem amount. If the actual expenses for lodging are incurred, the actual expenses must be approved in advance by a written justification that demonstrates that the per diem rate is not available at area lodging facilities for the dates requested.

Air and Ground Transportation

Expenses for transportation include travel on commercial bus, air, or rail and are reimbursable in addition to the per diem allowance. Transportation costs also include local transit system fares, taxi fares/app-based ride services (standard), mileage when operating a private vehicle, parking, and tolls.

For the Board's quarterly meetings and for each standing committee meeting sponsored by the Board, expenses incurred in purchasing airline and/or train tickets (electronic tickets) and securing lodging reservations for members are coordinated and prepaid by the Board. Once a meeting agenda is finalized, a Governing Board staff member and/or Board contractor will typically contact each Board member to ascertain the members' travel needs. Airline reservations are coordinated through a government travel agency that issues fully refundable tickets at low cost to government travelers.

Airline tickets purchased through the government travel agency utilize "contract carriers" which provide the government with low cost fares that do not have penalties associated with changes made in travel plans after a ticket has been issued. These carriers negotiate discounted rates with the government each fiscal year. Travel is at coach fares; first class travel is not authorized. Board members therefore do not have flexibility in choosing carriers, unless there are extenuating circumstances such as instances where a contract carrier's flight schedule is unsuitable for meeting times and the member's travel schedule, in which case a written justification must be provided. It is to be noted that tickets can only be purchased from one point to the next point, i.e., continuing trips and stopovers cannot be authorized unless they are related to Board work or approved in advance of each travel, based on extenuating circumstances and documented for cost savings to the government.

In situations where members purchase their own airline or train tickets, reimbursement of the ticket expenses cannot exceed the cost of a government fare that would have been purchased through the government contract carrier. In order to be reimbursed for tickets purchased by Board members, the Board member staff member needs to be notified of the ticket price in advance of the purchase to ensure that the purchased price does not exceed the government fares and to ensure that the traveler is reimbursed. Airline ticket receipts are necessary to process reimbursement, even in cases where electronic tickets have been purchased. Ticket receipts must be submitted prior to the travel dates. Please note that when members purchase penalty tickets, the Governing Board will not be responsible for fare changes that result in increased costs and penalties.

Government negotiated airline fares are published each fiscal year on the GSA web site under the "Airfares: City Pair" program. Frequent flier miles earned by travelers using government contract carriers can be utilized for personal use by travelers.

~~Resources on contract carriers for air travel are available at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/transportation-airfare-pov-etc/city-pair-program-cpp>~~

The benefits of the program are highlighted below.

- Fares are priced on one-way routes permitting plans for multiple destinations
- Advance purchase is not required
- A minimum or maximum length of stay is not required
- Tickets are fully refundable
- Last minute seat availability is offered
- There are no blackout periods

City Pairs Program and Search Pages: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/transportation-airfare-pov-etc/city-pair-program-cpp>



Rental Cars

Except for trips to and from transportation terminals, prior approval is required for utilization of private automobiles and rental cars, in lieu of air or rail, as the primary mode of travel to a Board meeting. When a private automobile is used for travel, reported mileage cost will be reimbursed at the current rate of 0.575 cents a mile for FY 2021.

Mileage for use of personal automobile in trips to and from transportation terminals will be reimbursed at the same rate. The use of rental cars is only approved in exceptional situations where special circumstances exist for use of a rental car, and where the costs of the rental car are less than costs incurred in utilizing other modes of transportation. Transportation receipts must accompany claims for reimbursement.

Cost Reimbursement

Prior to each meeting, along with information on your travel arrangements and lodging needs, you will receive an expense sheet for itemization of your expenses (downloadable from the member secure site) for submission of your expenses and receipts. The Department's regulations require submission of expense vouchers within 5 working days after completion of travel. We strongly encourage you to submit your expenses for reimbursement electronically as soon as possible. Reimbursement to the member via electronic deposit usually takes 5 working days after processing of your claim. A Board staff member will alert you via email on the approximate date of the funds transfer to your account for the travel reimbursement. You may wish to keep copies of your travel claims for your records.

Should you have questions on travel arrangements, please contact Angela Scott via email at angela.scott@ed.gov or phone at (202) 357-7502.